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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2319
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SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PTER PGOV IN
SUBJECT: ULFA SUSPECTED IN MARCH 31 TERRORIST ATTACK KILLING ONE

¶1. (SBU) On March 31, an improvised explosive devise (IED)
exploded in Jyotikuchi locality in Guwahati, the capital of the
Northeastern Indian state of Assam. The IED killed one person
and injured 13. There were no American casualties. According
to police contacts, the motorcycle borne IED was timer detonated
in front of a shop approximately two kilometers from the site of
Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee's scheduled election
rally. Mukherjee was not in the vicinity at the time of the
blast and continued with his campaign later that evening at an
alternate venue. As of today, no one has claimed responsibility
for the attack.

¶2. (SBU) Assam's Inspector General of Police in charge of Law
and Order told POLFSN that the police suspect that the United
Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) was responsible for the attack.
Media contacts opined that the attack did not target Mukherjee,
but rather was done in commemoration of the group's April 7
anniversary. Historically, ULFA has launched a series of IED
attacks preceding the anniversary. This latest attack occurred
during a time when the Indian security agencies have stepped up
operations against ULFA. On March 31, 44 ULFA militants
surrendered to the Indian Army. Several journalists speculated
to POLFSN that ULFA conducted the attack to demonstrate its
continued operational capabilities to destabilize the security
situation thereby making it easier to extort money from
businesses to fund their ongoing activities.

PAYNE